Glossary of Terms
Supporting K-3 English Language Arts of the Georgia Performance Standards

Alphabetic principle - The concept that letters and letter combinations represent individual phonemes in words in written language.

Antonym - A word opposite in meaning to another word.

Automaticity - Accuracy and speed; fast, effortless word recognition resulting from a great deal of reading practice. Generally, accuracy is not achieved without explicit and systematic instruction in decoding. ‘Speed’ is also known as rate. The rate a student reads encompasses how smoothly he/she can read connected text.

Affix - This is a general term that refers to both prefixes and suffixes.

Blending - The task of combining sounds rapidly, to accurately represent the word.

Comprehension - Understanding what one is reading; the ultimate goal of all reading activity.

Consonant blend - Two or more consonants appearing together in a word with each retaining its sound (e.g., st, pl, br, str).

Consonant digraph - Two consonants together that represent one phoneme (e.g., ch, sh)

Connected Text - Words that are linked (as opposed to words that are in a list) as in sentences, phrases, and paragraphs.

Decoding - The process of translating printed words into an oral language representation, using knowledge of letter-sound relationships and word structure.

Decodable text - Decodable or controlled text consists mostly of words that contain phonic elements that are familiar to the students as well as previously taught sight words such as high frequency words, irregular words, and story
words. Decodable texts provide students the chance to apply newly acquired phonic knowledge to what they are reading.

**Differentiated instruction** - Matching instruction to meet the different needs of learners in a given classroom

**Fluency** - The ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with appropriate expression

**High-frequency words** - A small group of words (300-500) that account for a large percentage of words in print and contain letters that stray from the most common sound pronunciation because they do not follow common phonic patterns (e.g., were, was, laugh, been).

**Inflectional Suffix** - In English, a suffix that expresses plurality or possession when added to a noun tense when added to a verb, and comparison when added to an adjective and some adverbs (-s, -es, -ing, -ed). A major difference between inflectional and derivational morphemes is that inflections added to verbs, nouns, or adjectives do not change the grammatical role or part of speech of the base words.

**Informational Text** - Non-fiction books, also referred to as expository text that contain facts and information.

**Irregular words** - Words that contain letters that stray from the most common sound pronunciation.

**Multisyllabic words** - Words with more than one syllable. The average number of syllables in the words students read should increase steadily throughout the grades.

**Narrative Text** - Text that tells a story about fictional or real events.

**Onset/rime** - In a syllable, the onset is the initial consonant or consonants and the rime is the vowel and an consonants that follow it. (e.g., In the word ‘cat’, /k/ is the onset and /at/ is the rime.)

**Phoneme** - A single unit of sound in a spoken word (e.g., /k/ in ‘cat’).

**Phonemic awareness** - The ability to notice, think about, or manipulate the individual phonemes (sounds) in words. This term is used to refer to the highest level of phonological awareness” awareness of individual phonemes in words.
**Phonics** - The study of the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent.

**Phonological awareness** - Sensitivity to, or awareness of, the phonological structure of words in one's language. This term is used to refer to a child’s sensitivity to any aspect of phonological structure in language. It encompasses awareness of individual words in sentences, syllables, and onset-rime segments as well as awareness of individual phonemes.

**Prefix** - An affix attached before a base word or root (e.g., *re-* in reprint).

**Prior Knowledge** - Refers to schema, the knowledge and experience that readers bring to the text.

**Prosody** - Reading with expression, proper intonation, and phrasing. This helps readers to sound as if they are speaking the part they are reading. It is also this element of fluency that sets it apart from automaticity.

**Segmenting** - Separating the individual phonemes, or sounds, of a word into discrete units.

**Sight words** - Words that are recognized immediately. Teachers often think that sight words are irregular, or that this refers to high frequency word lists, such as the Dolch and Fry. However, any word that is recognized automatically is a sight word. These words may be phonetically regular or irregular.

**Suffix** - An affix attached to the end of a base, root, or stem that changes the meaning or grammatical function of the word (e.g., *-en* in oxen).

**Synonym** - Words that have similar meanings.

**Vocabulary** - Refers to all the words in our language. One must know words to communicate effectively. Vocabulary is important to comprehension because readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean.

**Vowel digraphs/pairs** - Two vowels together that represent one phoneme in a word (e.g., *ea, ai, oa*).